The Case of Larrie Schmidt

There is a very fascinating young man in Dallas named Larrie Schmidt. He is especially fascinating for a writer out to do an "exposé" of the Right, and so it was that Patricia Swank discovered him, apparently through the Warren Report, exposed him in the pages of *Look*, and in the process linked Young Americans for Freedom to his fantastic plans.

Larrie Schmidt's vision was one of such Herculean proportions as to amuse anyone who has toiled in the political vineyards. It was all very simple: he and his friends would take over YAF, then through YAF take over the conservative movement, and through the conservative movement take over the nation. All this was to be accomplished by 1968, through his secret apparatus named Conservatism USA, or CUSA.

This rates a good belly-laugh, most of us would agree. But Miss Swank and *Look* took him seriously enough to devote two pages of that mass-circulation magazine to the danger Larrie and his friends posed to the nation.

According to Miss Swank, a speech at the home of Dr. Robert Morris (who was unaware of Schmidt's plans or CUSA) "catapulted Schmidt into organizational activity as Southwestern executive-secretary of Young Americans for Freedom. He worked fiercely, raised money, put CUSA activism into YAF. But 'those officers just didn't want to go as fast as I did. I was too advanced.' He turned to other things."

Schmidt entered the Warren Report because of his connection with Bernard Weissman, who placed the now-famous anti-Kennedy advertisement in the November 22, 1963 issue of the *Dallas Morning News*. The facts concerning his relationship with YAF are as follows:

- Larry Schmidt was a member of YAF for a few months in 1963, but has not been a member since that time.

- He was never Southwestern Executive Secretary of YAF. Miss Swank apparently took *his* word literally, as recorded in a letter in the Warren Report ("I am the executive secretary—the number 3 man in the headquarters.").

- His reasons for picking YAF for infiltration are revealing. "I wanted to start a new movement, a new organization. I had to compromise. Others . . . suggested we use an already existing movement and organization—namely YAF or Young Americans for Freedom, which already has 50,000 members or so" (sic). He mentioned the many Congressmen and other prominent Americans on the National Advisory Board, then added, "YAF has no connection with the radical right element and shuns it wherever it can."

- And, as Miss Swank admits, Larrie Schmidt and YAF didn't mix well. Soon he was off to "other things."

Obviously, a mass-membership organization cannot investigate all applicants for membership. What is important is that it have a membership sound enough in principle to reject a person with the egotistic and simplistic views of a Larrie Schmidt, and this was the case. Schmidt's associate Bernard Weissman remarked caustically that "the most [YAF] ever accomplished was running around burning baskets from Yugoslavia" (sic). To persons with their grand designs, YAF must indeed seem tame. They don't need us and we certainly don't need them.